



## World of Work Summit

### Panel discussion

Geneva, 11 June 2015

*Moderator: Ms Yueh*

#### CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE WORLD OF WORK

The President of the 104th Session of the Conference, Ms Ieva Jaunzeme, welcomed participants to the World of Work Summit and provided an overview of the programme for the day, with particular reference to the morning's interactive panel discussion on the topic "Climate Change and the World of Work".

The Secretary-General welcomed all participants and explained the relevance and timeliness of the theme of the panel given the expected adoption of the sustainable development goals, in September, and a hoped-for global agreement on addressing climate change, in Paris in December.

The Secretary-General referenced the adoption of a resolution with a set of conclusions concerning achieving decent work, green jobs and sustainable development at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference in 2013. This had created a policy framework to guide countries to ensure a just transition for all towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies, which required an active role of the actors of the world of work. The implications on the labour market of climate change and a transition to low-carbon, resource-efficient societies would critically shape the mandate and role of the Organization in its next century.

At the same time the world of work could contribute significantly to tackling climate change in key economic areas. This could entail new skills, new workplace practices and options for greening enterprises and new sustainable enterprises in emerging green sectors. The ILO had estimated that up to 60 million additional jobs could be created in a greener, low-carbon economy, identifying key sectors such as energy, building, transport, and agriculture.

The Secretary-General stated that the challenges and opportunities could be met if the right policies were adopted. He stressed the urgency at hand, as inaction now would come with high costs in the future. He made reference to a recorded message specifically dedicated to the World of Work Summit by Mr Pharrell Williams, a well-known singer and climate change advocate.

The Secretary-General concluded his introduction by encouraging the participants to help shaping the

contribution by the world of work for tackling climate change.

The President of the Conference thanked the Secretary-General for setting the grounds for a relevant panel discussion and introduced the panellists. These were: Mr Mansour Sy, Minister of Labour, Social Dialogue, Professional Organizations and Relations with Institutions, Senegal; Mr Luis Eduardo Garzón, Labour Minister and Advisory Minister for Social Dialogue, Colombia; Mr François Rebsamen, Minister of Labour, Employment, Professional Training and Social Dialogue, France; Ms Linda Kromjong, Secretary-General, International Organisation of Employers (IOE); and Ms Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The panel was to be chaired by Ms Linda Yueh, distinguished academic, author and BBC correspondent.

An ILO video was projected depicting the severity of the effects of climate change on the world of work, as well as the potential for new green jobs. The video was followed by a recorded video message by Ms Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. She stressed three issues as central as governments advanced negotiations towards a new, universal climate change agreement in Paris: (i) how to create good jobs in a stable environment; (ii) how to grow economies without growing emissions; and (iii) how to deliver the benefits of a new growth model to communities and to companies. She urged each country to take a holistic approach in developing and implementing their contribution, with ministers of economy, of land use and of labour joining ministers of environment and being actively involved.

The President invited the panellists to the podium, explaining that they would address four groups of questions from the floor, namely on the impact of climate change, responses, dialogue and a concluding part, respectively.

On the first issue, the impact of climate change, a representative from the Philippines, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, recalled the devastating impact of typhoon Haiyan, which had affected more than 800,000 workers. He emphasized that social protection systems are key to building climate resilience as they can protect communities when livelihoods are hit. He raised the question of

how to ensure that climate adaptation is not only focused on infrastructure but also on people's capacity to respond to disasters.

A representative from Japan, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group, noted that Japan had recently committed itself to reducing emissions by 26 per cent by 2030. He argued the importance of ensuring sustained growth while cutting emissions by increased energy efficiency. He indicated that the private sector was essential in the process, and noted the importance of transfer of technologies offering opportunities for new greener businesses infrastructure development and green jobs. He raised the question of how effectively the ILO would attend to this issue.

A representative from the Philippines, speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG), underlined the many calamities and disasters that affected the region and the threat this posed to decent work. She asked how the ILO could contribute more to the sustainability of livelihoods and the building of skills for workers especially in post-disaster relief programmes.

A representative from Ethiopia, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, asked the panel how climate change would impact on labour productivity and labour mobility, in particular in developing countries.

Mr Sy responded by firstly noting the tragic consequences of climate change and its dramatic effects on the world of work. He indicated that climate change was bringing about natural disasters, which could be different in scope. He stated that Senegal in particular faced drought and land degradation and that natural resources were being jeopardized. He further indicated that given this context, the government had launched numerous initiatives to address these environmental issues.

Mr Sy added that within countries, climate change affects people differently with particular impact in rural areas, resulting in the migration of the poorest populations to towns to find jobs. He concluded by highlighting that climate change had great impact on migration both within and between countries.

Mr Rebsamen underlined that climate change is going to have significant impacts on the world economy and that certain sectors will be more affected, notably fishing, industry, manufacturing, recycling, agriculture, construction and transport. He further raised the importance of evaluating potential positive impacts on the labour market and pointed to the ILO figure of 60 million new jobs from greening the economy. He concluded by emphasizing the need to support workers losing their jobs and affected by changes arising from the transition.

Mr Garzón suggested going beyond the diagnostics of problems and focusing on the opportunities in the green economy. He stated that the Colombian Government had included decent work in its development strategy, joining up the ministries of labour, economy and health. He noted that the agricultural sector was most affected, while there were many opportunities as well. Likewise, entrepreneurs with adequate skills in recycling could benefit from new opportunities. He added that Colombia was recognized as a country with high recycling rates and that this offered great potential in creating jobs.

Ms Burrow underlined the ITUC's phrase: "No jobs on a dead planet" which was more than simply a slogan. She stressed the need to start the transition

process now. While adaptation was critical, if efforts towards mitigation were inadequate this would result in more and more people being displaced. She called on governments to start planning seriously for a just transition as workers were already losing lives and livelihoods. The transition from coal-fired plants and fossil fuels to renewable energy would take time and there would be a need to secure jobs, over a specific time span, of those workers affected and build their skills to use new technologies. She stressed that climate disasters could only get worse after the failure of the Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP15) and that the coming Paris negotiation at COP21 was critical to put the floor for action in place and from there build a plan for just transition.

Ms Kromjong stated that from an employers' perspective the transition was not only seen as a challenge but also as a huge opportunity for companies arising from innovation. She argued that it was important for employers to manage the change in an effective manner. She noted the issue of a skills gap to be addressed which might, however, not be possible in the numbers and speed required. She concluded by stating that enterprises were ready to address that challenge in a collaborative manner.

The moderator continued by asking delegates from the floor to share their questions about the second issue, responses.

A Government representative of Greece, speaking on behalf of the Europe group, pointed out that climate change would affect employment and wealth creation across the globe, exacerbating an already bleak outlook. He stated that preserving existing employment and creating new employment in the context of the green economy would be a major challenge for the ILO. Given that context, the Government representative raised the question of whether the impediments for achieving the required actions were political, social or economic.

A Government representative from Trinidad and Tobago, speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC), noted that the Rio +20 Conference had marked an important milestone for sustainable development. In the context of corporate social responsibility and the environmental impacts caused by multinational enterprises in developing countries, the representative asked what measures could be used to create employment and decent work and what kind of role public-private partnerships (PPP) could play to support this endeavour.

A representative from Kenya, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group, stated that his country followed up closely on any discussions related to environment. She remarked that employers saw new opportunities for innovation arising in relation to climate change. In this context, she asked which would be the appropriate responses to foster the development of new enterprises, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the creation of jobs and the required new talent and knowledge.

A representative from Ghana, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, underlined the significant effects of climate change. He pointed out that African countries needed to industrialize but that this industrialization depended most often on using fossil fuel-based technologies. Therefore in his question to the panel, he asked how climate change action and industrialization and decent work could go hand in hand.

In response, Ms Burrow said that there were many obstacles to undertaking actions at all levels, including political obstacles, driven by fears and insecurities about possible changes as well as strong interests in short-term profit-making of the industries of today. She remarked that new technologies for developing countries to industrialize would have to be based as much as possible not on outdated but new technologies using renewable energy sources. Investment strategies – for example by pension funds – should focus on the latter in order to reach global zero net carbon emissions by 2050. With regard to PPPs, Ms Burrow noted their important role but recognized also that these kinds of partnerships had often faced difficulties in their implementation. She concluded that there seemed to be overall a lack of ambition to implement actions at all levels.

Mr Rebsamen concurred that climate change ambitions were still too low and that progress to an agreement in Paris had to be accelerated. He underlined that France would support a universal agenda for sustainable development adopted by the United Nations in September defining relevant objectives for all countries. Every country would need to implement the measures for a greener economy including an effective monitoring plan which would allow for measuring achievements at national level and undertake comparison at global level.

Ms Kromjong stated that multinational enterprises needed to go with the flow, stay competitive and adapt to changing expectations of stakeholders. This, she said, made it clear that multinational enterprises required a flexible regulatory framework which would give them the opportunity to change and adjust enterprise practices. Ms Kromjong further stated that PPPs represented a possible way forward although they needed careful implementation to ensure effectiveness. She concluded by saying that the support to SMEs would have to be different as they often needed more hands-on support for change.

Mr Sy mentioned that his country worked together with the ILO, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and United Nations Development Programme, in the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) to analyse national development challenges and address them accordingly. He said that Senegal had created a platform where enterprises could sign up to sustainable development priorities and that such platforms of dialogue and joint commitment would need to be created at all levels and reach out to employers, workers and governments. Mr Sy further stated that climate change already affected economic activities in Senegal like the tourism sector. He explained that this would lead to a need to re-train workers and provide them with alternative employment opportunities.

Mr Garzón supported earlier remarks from the panellists and noted that climate change could be perceived as a new opportunity which brings economic diversification, more independence from fossil fuels and new business opportunities. Countries should take a proactive role and establish a robust public policy framework that could respond to the opportunities and be applied in the different economic sectors. He concluded that, as with the earlier discourse around decent work, issues around climate change and the green economy had to attain a broader understanding and support over the coming years.

Ms Burrow noted that in the context of technology transfer critical aspects like intellectual property would need to be discussed. She added that more ambitious technology-sharing was needed including through the establishment of so-called technology pools.

Mr Garzón added that this year represented an important milestone in the climate change and sustainable development discussion at global, regional and national levels. He stated that the most recent Inter-American Summit had put the issues of decent work, climate change and technology transfer high on its agenda.

Mr Rebsamen remarked that a lot remained to be done at national and international level. He further elaborated that at national level, issues like social protection and social security needed to be more efficiently addressed while at the same time at global level the issue of international solidarity needed to be further discussed. He noted that it would be difficult to establish a green economy without financial aid and international solidarity.

The moderator summarized that item by complimenting the panel for its clarity about what was needed: technological transfer; social dialogue; a clear framework; and high ambition.

On the third issue, dialogue, a Government representative from Paraguay, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, stated that the key question in the Director-General's Report was how to manage the change to a greener economy and ensure that benefit-sharing mechanisms were established at national level. The representative went on to ask what implications this had for technology transfer.

A Government representative from China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, said that in order to achieve reductions in carbon emissions, enterprises with high energy consumption were forced to shut down in China. Now jobs need to be created for the workers who became unemployed when enterprises closed. The representative made reference to the ILO Green Jobs Programme report, "Skills for Green Jobs. A Global View", as a key document for cases like this one. He called upon the ILO to continue the work of the Green Jobs Programme and encouraged member States to engage. He inquired about the types of activities the Green Jobs Programme offered.

A representative of Argentina, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, stated that social dialogue was needed to ensure fair development and a just transition. He asked whether a specific forum for social dialogue should be set up at national or regional levels or if existing institutions and bodies should be used for such purposes.

A representative of Uruguay, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group, said that the protection of biodiversity and environment was key for Uruguay, and asked how ILO constituents could contribute to the climate change agenda in theory and practice.

The moderator remarked that the audience had signalled that technology was central to the discussion, stating that the private sector had the technology and inquiring as to how to make that technology available.

Ms Kromjong said that technological change was relevant for development and that enterprises were at the forefront. She went on to say that technology was linked with science and that development was linked with technology transfer. She said that while there was no contradiction between development

and climate protection, it needed to be framed in a positive way. She said that climate change created new opportunities and the rich needed to assist those who needed help.

The moderator said that there was not much technology in developing countries and asked how to make technology more accessible. She mentioned subsidies, compensation or government purchase as mechanisms to facilitate technology transfer to poor countries.

Ms Kromjong responded that there was no single solution and that all the proposals mentioned by the moderator were needed. Further, there was business interest in both innovation and sharing technology, which helped make the technologies become more accessible and enabled enterprises to benefit from the market.

Mr Rebsamen said that it was important to include those who work with technology in this debate. Workers needed to be trained upstream in order to transfer technology, induce innovation and create jobs around the world. He also stated that education was important for technological progress and innovation.

The moderator asked whether there was an obligation of richer countries to pay for technology so that poor countries could access technology and human capital.

Mr Rebsamen responded that the richest countries needed to lead by example, making the initial effort. It was necessary to make funds available to develop technologies. He said that there were significant opportunities in developing countries and that all international institutions must be involved.

Ms Burrow stated that there was inadequate social dialogue around climate change. She described situations where unions collided, referring to the new energy strategy in Germany which had created dissent among and between workers and employers. She said that whether it was regional or national, dialogue was always needed – also in the area of environment. She foresaw dialogue on resource productivity and labour productivity. If one combined these discussions with social protection floors, minimum wage and labour rights, this would allow for a just transition. She said that the transition could not be realized without dialogue.

Mr Garzon, responding to a question on biodiversity, said this was an important asset to Colombia and other developing countries. He said that everyone had to take efforts towards social protection at the level of commitment needed to preserve biodiversity. Regarding social dialogue, he said that although it was emphasized here at the international level, at national level it was much more difficult. He stated that a tripartite approach needed to be built into the environmental agenda.

Mr Rebsamen said that France could serve as an example to other countries in terms of fostering and facilitating dialogue. He said that France was currently mobilizing employers to exchange with all green jobs stakeholders, adding that nothing could be achieved without involving all stakeholders in the dialogue.

In terms of conclusions to the debate, a representative from France, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group asked what signal the ILO could send to those attending COP21 and what the ILO would like included in the hoped-for agreement.

A representative from France, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, called on the ILO to send a

clear signal for a policy framework that would allow progress on climate change, the environment and workers' rights. The representative stated that many of the challenges related to COP21 demonstrated an urgent need for a just transition, emphasizing that decent work had to be incorporated in any new agreements. The representative then asked the panel what they expected to come out of COP21 and what actions they would take to ensure that decent work was taken into account in the agreement.

A Government representative from Latvia, speaking on behalf of the Europe group, said that after years of preparation and ILO engagement, the post-2015 development agenda was likely to integrate environment, social, economic and sustainability aspects. Following this preparatory work, the four pillars of decent work should be well reflected in the agenda. The representative said that when it came to climate change, the Decent Work Agenda was often left aside. The representative asked panelists how the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and specific items on the agenda at COP21 could complement each other to develop synergies. He asked how the ILO could sharpen its focus on climate change.

A Government representative from South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, asked the panel what special protective tools were available to tackle climate change effects like sea level rise and drought, particularly for the agriculture and tourism industries in Africa that were likely to be affected. The representative went on to ask the panel what agriculture and tourism related policies they would like to see come out of COP21.

In concluding, Mr Sy congratulated France and Peru on their joint "Call for Action on Climate Change and Decent Work". He stated that COP21 provided an opportunity to take stock of the current status, short- and medium-term aims and ambitions and many other issues. With regards to technology transfer, the Minister suggested that different countries and sectors needed to be addressed individually in order to custom-tailor the transfer of technology to particular needs, referring to the PAGE initiative in Senegal as one such holistic and tailored approach. The Minister said that all players needed to be aware of their responsibilities, and that this could only happen in the context of social dialogue, emphasizing the importance of this approach. The Minister said that there was a mechanism in Senegal to involve all social partners through a national climate change committee as well as a social pact that helped to identify areas where stakeholders could work on climate change issues.

Mr Garzón said that COP21 should produce one economic policy, whether at national or interregional levels, that addressed technology transfer. This policy should include a road map and indications of what the suggested path would entail.

Mr Rebsamen stated that France needed to set far-reaching objectives and demonstrate how to achieve them. The Minister mentioned the "agenda of solutions" of COP21 and the recently signed "Call for Action" between France and Peru. He concurred that technology should be made available based on the specificities of each country.

Ms Kromjong called on the ILO to provide strong guidance. She expressed a need for adequate data, saying that reliable facts and figures were crucial to inform enterprises planning. She called on the ILO to provide a framework for exchanging best practi-

es to achieve sustainable development which supports both enterprises and workers.

Ms Burrow called for the highest possible level of ambition from governments, a commitment to a just transition and dialogue between all stakeholders. Ms Burrow stated that there were only three ways to save the planet: reducing emissions; reforestation; and the protection and renewal of carbon sinks. Ms

Burrow pointed out that all of these could create jobs, and that every job needed to be decent.

The moderator concluded by saying that the panel had been exemplary in its clarity about what was needed: technological transfer; social dialogue; a clear framework; and high ambitions.

Ms Jaunzeme thanked the panel and the audience for the interactive and productive discussion and closed the morning sitting.

## Special sitting

Thursday, 11 June 2015, 3.10 p.m.

*President: Ms Jaunzeme*

### ADDRESS BY MR KAILASH SATYARTHI, 2014 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE

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#### The PRESIDENT

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It is now my honour to declare open a special sitting of the Conference and to welcome Mr Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, to the ILO. I give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference to introduce Mr Satyarthi.

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#### The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

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It is, this afternoon, my most pleasant duty and an immense personal pleasure to welcome Kailash Satyarthi to our summit today.

Kailash-ji, you have been part of the ILO family for many, many years and today we welcome you. We welcome you back to your home and honour you for your many achievements.

Kailash has lived by his convictions. Leaving electrical engineering, his first organizing work was with informal quarry workers and, for 35 years, he has been an activist, a lead actor, a passionate advocate in the global movement to end child labour and forced labour. And, notwithstanding this global projection – this global role – grass-roots action to empower the most socially excluded has been at the heart of his work and of his philosophy. He initiated *Bachpan Bachao Andolan* (the BBA, or Save the Childhood Movement), a grass-roots movement that has freed and rehabilitated more than 83,000 children from child labour.

But eradicating child labour on a sustainable basis also demands political will and systematic social and economic change. Under Kailash's leadership, the BBA has contributed to this, both in law and in practice in India. His organization has never lost its human heart and the individual support that it offers to children also sets a gold standard. A visit, for example, to Bal Ashram, BBA's rehabilitation centre in Rajasthan, can show you how with love, with care and with a fully rounded education a child who has suffered appalling treatment can still come to enjoy a life of happiness and of freedom.

As a worldwide campaigner, Kailash was a key architect of the Global March against Child Labour, a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), of trade unions and of teachers' trade unions, in particular, and the largest civil society network in the movement against child labour. He was also a founding President of the Global Campaign for Education and of GoodWeave International.

Today, I am sure that many of us here will remember the 86th Session (1998) of the International Labour Conference, when hundreds of children and adults from around the world, with Kailash, ended their physical global march in this Assembly Hall, demanding a new labour Convention on the worst forms of child labour. Today, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), has 179 ratifications, making it the most widely ratified and the fastest-ratified Convention in the history of our Organization. Kailash-ji, I know that you are continuing to help us reach the goal of universal ratification, both of Convention No. 182 and of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), as well.

Kailash has received numerous human rights awards and, as you all know, in 2014, he shared, with Malala Yousafzai, the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. Many people in this room are privileged to count Kailash as a personal friend and we are all, each one of us, privileged that he has been a friend of the ILO, supportive of its mandate, of its standards and of its work, and, not least, of our International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

And I think that that – I hope – mutually beneficial friendship has helped the development of our integrated fundamental rights approach in eradicating child labour and, in particular, our work on education and child labour: child labour in agriculture; forced labour of children; and on the hardest-to-reach children.

In the name – I am sure – of all of us here at the ILO, Kailash-ji, let me congratulate you again on the Nobel Peace Prize. I know that you have been inundated with invitations. You told me this morning that you have 15,000 on your desk. And so we are particularly honoured that you could join us today; this is all the more meaningful on the eve of the World Day against Child Labour, which you will also mark with us.

We still have much to do to achieve a world free from all forms of child labour and forced labour, but we know that we can continue to count on you, Kailash, to be a champion for a global economy that places social justice, human rights and the well-being of adults and children, girls and boys, at its heart and we look forward to your message.

When I entered this room, I was reminded of a day back in 1998: 2 June. Today, I entered this room according to protocol, but on that day in 1998 some of you will have witnessed the making of history. It was a day when hundreds of boys and girls – former child labourers and child slaves, victims and survivors – entered the *Palais des Nations*, carrying placards and banners in their hands. The strong slogans are still vivid in my mind and in my memory, and it seems as if their echo is still here. When hundreds of these marchers, who travelled across 103 countries, covering 80,000 km of land, shouted loudly, “No more tools in tiny hands!”, “We want books! We want toys!”, “Go, go, global march!”, “Stop, stop, child labour!”, “We want education!” – these were the slogans in this hall – it was, as I said, the making of history. Not only in the life of the *Palais*, or the International Labour Conference, but it was a historic moment in the fight for justice, equity and human rights, especially for the most vulnerable children on earth.

At that time, the then Director-General Michel Hansenne said to the marchers that, “You are far from your homes, but you have a home here”. He promised that, in the future, we would develop the tools that would put an end to miseries like this. That was the relationship between the children of the world and the ILO.

As the Director-General mentioned, this worldwide movement, which was embraced here, involving millions of people – trade unions, employers, governments, civil society organizations, NGOs and religious groups – helped lay the foundation for a new ILO Convention on the worst forms of child labour. So far, 179 countries have ratified it. And not only that: because of the worldwide movement, which has grown, 167 countries have ratified another Convention, which was ratified by far fewer countries before 1998. And that is the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

We have seen the results. We have 82 million fewer children working as child labourers since the late 1990s. We have also seen a decrease in the number of out-of-school children since then, because these two issues are so closely linked.

So today, when the Director-General was referring to me being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, I will honestly tell you that this prize is not only for me, but for every single person – in government, in workers’ unions, in NGOs, in employers’ organizations – who has helped in the reduction of child labour so far. They must all be congratulated and credited for this Nobel Peace Prize. One person alone cannot take the credit.

And therefore, today, I am here to thank you and express my gratitude on behalf of all those millions of children who have been saved from exploitation, misery, poverty and illiteracy.

Friends: my relationship, which I cherish and have been proud of for so many years, with the ILO – and especially with IPEC – goes back maybe 30 or 32 years. The first time I came to the ILO building was probably in the late 1980s and since then you can see that a monument has been erected outside the building which commemorates the Global March against Child Labour. Have you seen that monument, which depicts a child leaving behind all his tools and carrying a bag, running to school? Have you seen it? Yes, you might have seen

it. But if not, go and see it. It is a symbol of what the world’s children want. They want to leave behind all their tools and guns and they want to take books and toys in their hands. They want to leave workplaces, fields and mines, and houses where they are kept as child labourers and bonded labourers, because they feel that the best place for them is school.

I remember how important IPEC – the flagship programme of the ILO which was established in the early 1990s – has been in the fight against child labour. I also remember some of my discussions with then German Minister of Labour, Norbert Blüm, and my testimonies before the German Bundestag in the early 1990s. During those discussions, there was an idea that we should have a worldwide programme to eliminate child labour and, later on, we saw that, with the support of the German Government, IPEC was established. So I have a very deep, emotional relationship with the formation of IPEC, and I wish to see it become a more vibrant, more resourced and more effective programme to put an end to child labour in the world.

We have seen the progress; but we still have 168 million children who are trapped in various forms of child labour. Of them, 85 million are languishing in the worst forms of child labour, such as slavery, prostitution, forced labour, bonded labour, work as child soldiers and so on, and work in hazardous occupations.

I come across children who are sold and bought like animals and sometimes at a lower price than animals. I come across children who are producing wealth at the cost of their childhood and freedom. I have personally freed thousands of them and they say “What did we do wrong? We are not responsible for poverty. Someone else is responsible but we are victims of poverty and then we are victims of slavery and that is intolerable.”

So the big changes are still ahead. Before one can say that I am a Nobel Laureate, I am a grass-roots activist at heart and I want it to continue like that.

When I meet these children, I know that 168 million or 85 million are not simply figures. Each one of them has a beating heart, and they are looking at us to help. We have to respond.

Some of you, those of you who were present at The Hague Global Child Labour Conference a few years ago, may recall that there was a tiny boy there who came from India, whose name was Kinsu. Kinsu was a car cleaner and he was standing side by side with the Queen of the Netherlands; the Queen asked him, in front of the big child labour conference, “What is your dream?” Kinsu replied, “My dream is to become an engineer”. And, dear friends, today I am proud to say that Kinsu is one of the brightest students at an engineering university in India. I was talking to him a few days ago, and when he learned that I was going to take part in a similar – or even much more important – Conference here in Geneva, he asked me, “Please say that my dream is coming true; but what about the dreams of my 168 million sisters and brothers?” So, dear friends, I bring this question. I bring this question from a successful boy. And this is the question being asked by many of the children whose childhood has been restored; they still feel for others and still ask, “What about my sisters and brothers?”

Each time, when I read a report that the number of child labourers is going down, I know that you must be feeling that you have accomplished something.

Personally speaking, it heals the injuries and wounds which have been almost everywhere in my body while rescuing children from slavery in the last 35 years. So it is a very personal feeling for me when I hear that the number of child labourers is going down. And that is why I cannot sit quiet. I always say that this Nobel Prize is just a comma in my work, in my fight, against child labour. The full stop will come only when we make child labour history, and I assure you that ours is the last generation that is going to make child labour history. We have to work hand in hand to achieve that. I am confident about it.

We can learn from some of the success stories. What works? Small, simple, unknown, unnoticed, grass-roots organizations are bringing some success, bringing some lessons – and sometimes they are lessons which remain unnoticed. We have to document these lessons properly, scale up and multiply. This is because grass-roots organizations are in touch with reality. They know how to fight and have the right mindset to overcome obstacles.

But we should also learn from what did not work. Sometimes we keep on investing in and experimenting with new theories and these experiments are completely disconnected from the realities on the ground. They are disconnected from the day-to-day life of the people for whom you work. We can also learn from those stories – why did a programme not work? So, when scaling up or designing any programme, connectivity with the realities on the ground is very important. Expertise from a distance will not work.

The theme of this year's high-level panel discussion is climate change and work-related issues. Some of you who were present at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil in 2012 may recall that I spoke about a few emergencies; and one of the very vital emergencies is ecological emergency. When we talk of ecological emergency, it is not all about ecological equilibrium; it is also about how the lives of poor people are affected.

I was in Nepal just three days ago, and had meetings with people who are victims of the recent earthquake, and also with the Prime Minister, the leaders of the opposition, government representatives and so on. Though we cannot call it a direct effect of climate change now, it is also an ecological emergency, which requires immediate attention.

I have been to schools which have been completely ruined. Standing on the ruins of those schools and classrooms, I felt a sense of emergency. Thirty thousand classrooms have been demolished by this earthquake and if we are not able to respond to it by way of reconstruction, then there is serious danger that a large number of children could be trafficked, could be enslaved, could be made child labourers, if they are not in schools. We know how climate change is resulting in the disruption of the weather, which is directly affecting agriculture. Sixty per cent of child labourers work in the agricultural sector. And if the weather is disrupted, in terms of rains, in terms of floods, and so on, then children are the worst victims. I personally rescued hundreds of children who are the victims of floods in an area called the Koshi River, in India. They were trafficked by people during and after the floods and brought to work as child slaves. Also, some of them became child prostitutes. It is a serious matter.

Climate change is also directly affecting poor people and the rate of displacement is getting higher and higher; that leads not only to the loss of traditional livelihoods but also, when they end up in cities and towns in search of a livelihood, they have to compromise on their wages and on their living and working conditions, as they are not really aware of their rights. Their children are forced to become child labourers: domestic help and so on. Many of the domestic helps that we have rescued in our country and in other countries are the victims of these kinds of climate change situations. So, climate change is having a direct effect in this regard.

A number of children – and we suspect that many of them are Bangladeshi children – who are forced to come to India are working in the mining area, in what we call the Jaintia mines in the north-east of India. We have seen this situation in a number of African countries, where the children are compelled to leave their livelihoods, or their parents' livelihood, and are running towards jobs in cities and towns. And it is so easy for traffickers to go and bring the children. So trafficking is a direct result of these situations in a number of places. We cannot ignore it. As I am not an expert on the subject, I am not going to speak much about climates, but one thing that I can definitely say is that government agencies should have a child-friendly approach in disaster management situations. Their preparedness is very important.

When I was in Nepal, I was very happy to see how the Government is trying to stop trafficking, and I think we have to build on that process. They are involving the police and other agencies to do it.

We know that child labour is decreasing. When it comes to trafficking and human slavery, however, especially child slavery, child slavery is not decreasing. We know that 5.5 million children are still working as forced labourers and, according to some other independent studies, the number is increasing because trafficking is increasing. So we have to respond to this and, therefore, I strongly support a few things.

One is that the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, has to be ratified and implemented by every single country, and I call for action in this regard. It is very, very important to stop trafficking and forced labour. So the Protocol is important.

The second thing is that, since the world is going to adopt the new sustainable development goals, the Global March against Child Labour, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Education International and a number of organizations jointly ran a campaign, with a demand that the international community should include specific language in the sustainable development goals for the abolition of child slavery. More than 550,000 people have signed the petition, which I handed over to the UN Secretary-General recently. The UN Secretary-General was quite positive that he is going to take it up. So I also urge the member States of the United Nations to support that. We cannot ignore the abolition of child slavery in the sustainable development agenda.

Dear friends, we cannot achieve the goal of eradicating child labour without education. Education should not be the monopoly of some people in some countries – especially quality education. We live in the world of the knowledge economy and, therefore, we have to invest in education; and that

is quality education, inclusive education, and education with equity. Quality education for fewer people is going to create more social imbalances. So quality education for all children is a very, very important thing. We cannot achieve education without the eradication of child labour. We must know that whatever schools we open, whatever teachers we hire, whatever investment we make, if we are not able to bring children from the mines and quarries and workshops and houses to the school gates, we cannot achieve our goal of achieving education for all.

So the eradication of child labour and education for all must go hand in hand. Collective investment has to be made in it. We cannot think of sustainable development goals; we cannot think of human dignity and rights and equity and justice and economic growth without education. We must know that child labour is one of the biggest or perhaps the biggest obstacle in achieving education and particularly quality education.

Friends, before I end, I would say to you that millions of children in the world are living in danger. It is a situation of emergency for millions of children. When I read in a newspaper, only two days ago, that girls were being sold for sex slavery for a price less than a cigarette pack in Syria, I felt ashamed. When I read that a 5-year-old child was given a gun to kill an opponent by militia groups in Iraq (on the Iraq–Syria border), and was buried alive when he could not handle that gun, I was angry. When I saw a picture of a young girl who was unable to satisfy her customers for sexual slavery, and who was buried alive, I was angry. I think this should make you all angry. Children are sold like that.

Almost 200 girls in Nigeria went missing. Some of them came back, but most of them are still miss-

ing. Nobody knows their fate. Nobody knows whether they were sold as sex slaves, or what has happened to them. We cannot simply talk about it. We have to act now, because their childhood is never going to come again. There is no compromise on it. Childhood is non-negotiable. Freedom of human beings, freedom of children is non-negotiable. And so the dignity of a child is non-negotiable and, dear friends, ministers, trade union leaders, employers, I know that you have that courage.

You have to be a little bold. You have to show the leadership that “business as usual” is not going to work. We have to take steps now. We live in a state of emergency for our children. And, therefore, looking at your faces, I refuse to accept that the power of all governments, the strength and outreach of all my union friends, and the wealth of all the employers’ groups is incapable of putting an end to child labour and child slavery. I refuse to accept this. You have that power and now we have to identify it; we have to work hand in hand and, as I have said before, we have to make child labour history in our lifetime.

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The PRESIDENT

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Many thanks, Mr Satyarthi. I strongly believe that we are here not just to listen. We are here in order to make life more decent and more just for all people, especially children.

This Organization has the appropriate instruments and you are the people who can and should make that happen and, I believe, like Mr Satyarthi said already, make history. Right now, in this room, there are many governments and also social partners who could put an end to child labour. Let us do that! I believe in a bright future for everybody.

*(The sitting was closed at 3.45 p.m.)*

## Special sitting

Thursday, 11 June 2015, 3.50 p.m.

*President: Ms Jaunzeme*

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
MR FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE,  
PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC**

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The PRESIDENT

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It is my great honour to welcome His Excellency Mr François Hollande, President of the French Republic, and to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference to welcome him on behalf of the Organization.

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*Original French:* The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

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It is a great honour to welcome you to the 104th Session of the International Labour Conference and to bid you a warm welcome here at the *Palais des Nations*. I consider that your participation in this global World of Work Summit is further proof of the importance that France attaches to the ILO, and I would like to take this special opportunity, on behalf of the ILO, to express our gratitude for the support that France has provided to us over the years.

For the past three years, your Government has been working to combat unemployment, which is a global challenge. It is implementing an ambitious programme with, as its primary goal, sustainable growth and employment creation. To that end, France has consistently given priority to tripartite consultation and social dialogue, a sign that the principles and values of the ILO are deeply rooted in French society and labour relations.

Let me remind you, Your Excellency, of your words during last year's commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy. All of us who hold dear the ILO and its Constitution were deeply touched by your words: you quoted the Declaration of Philadelphia, adopted on 10 May 1944, which states that all human beings have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity and of equal opportunity, and stressed that those words were still binding on us today. You also recalled that the mandate of the ILO to promote social justice was still relevant today and expressed our shared conviction that the promotion of fundamental labour rights, the creation of decent jobs and the effort to combat unemployment and inequality are necessary not only for national solidarity and development, but for peace as well. Let us hope that this historic partnership with France will help us to meet the challenges that we must face today. One of these challenges is the

transition towards a low-carbon economy, which is vital for the earth as a whole and for the very future of humanity. I would like to pay tribute to your Government's efforts to bring to a successful conclusion the climate negotiations at the Paris Conference.

The issue of climate change is on the agenda of this World of Work Summit because the commitment of the stakeholders in the world of work who are represented at this Conference is one of the key factors in the success of those negotiations. ILO advocacy in that regard focuses on a few simple ideas. The transition to greener economies provides opportunities for employment and growth that we must seize; we must begin to anticipate the skills and training that these economies will need. Lastly, in order for the transition to be equitable, it must make it possible to combat poverty and inequality more effectively. In short, decent work and the climate agenda go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing.

There are also many other employment- and work-related challenges that we must face. In order to better identify the upheavals that we are witnessing, I proposed to the Conference that we launch the future of work centenary initiative. Here again, I would like to express my appreciation for the support that France has provided for this initiative within the framework of our partnership agreement, for which we have just signed the renewal.

Mr President, I now give you the floor and thank you again for honouring us by speaking at this Conference.

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*Original French:* Mr HOLLANDE (*President of the French Republic*)

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At the outset, I would like to thank the Director-General for inviting me to this Conference at the *Palais des Nations*, which is so symbolic of the spirit of the United Nations and the spirit of freedom.

I was eager to accept this invitation, as each of my predecessors since President François Mitterrand has done. I am happy to continue that tradition and I would like to reaffirm the importance that France attaches to the International Labour Organization.

I am also addressing you in a specific context as we prepare for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, since my country is responsible for hosting this important global forum. The potential consequences of reaching agreement at that Conference or failing to do so make it all the more im-

portant for me to highlight the potential for ILO participation in that important event.

As I have said, there is a special link between the ILO and France, which we recall whenever necessary. Albert Thomas was the first Director-General of the International Labour Office and Léon Jouhaux was a Worker representative to the Organization for many years. In addition to this history, France is proud to be among the countries with the greatest number of ratifications of ILO Conventions – 125 of them, and before the year is out we will ratify the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), – since it would be pointless for your Organization, governments and the social partners to bind themselves under Conventions if States then undermined their given word by delaying the ratification of those instruments.

For nearly a century, France has understood the values and principles of your Organization: social progress, better protection for workers, and the dignity of work – work that emancipates and uplifts people rather than oppressing or exploiting them. Out of all the organizations, the ILO has done the most to promote social progress through a principle and a method that is valid at both the national and the international levels: that is, the tripartite approach, through which trade unions, employers' organizations and governments can work together. It is thanks to this system that you have produced 189 Conventions and 203 Recommendations and that progress has been made in areas that include, among others, freedom of association, collective bargaining, social dialogue, occupational safety and health, social protection and working conditions.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the harsh reality: unemployment affects far too many workers. The statistics – 200 million worldwide – do not fully reflect reality since too many workers are being denied the exercise of their rights and access to employment. No region, and no country is spared from that scourge. Although the governments that I have formed over the past three years have been doing their utmost to combat unemployment and adopt instruments with a view to job creation, we must continue to pursue that task tirelessly, since France's unemployment rate has been rising for the past ten years.

Another harsh reality is that so many individuals are living in poverty and with no social protection; more than 2 million people per year die from work-related causes and, despite all the rules that we have adopted, there are 170 million child labourers. That is the enormous task that we still have before us today: we need to find a way to implement the international standards while continuing to promote employment with dignity.

The real issue – progress – must be addressed throughout the world. Do new technologies, expanding economies and changes in businesses and trade lead to progress and, if so, does that progress benefit everyone? The world is changing; it is because, economies, businesses and workers are competing with each other day in and day out and such major upheavals are under way, that we must work together to make progress accessible to all.

We must not simply look back on the past as a golden age; it was not. Can anyone here say that things were better before? There is always room for progress, whether in the developed, the emerging or

the developing countries, and it is up to us – we, the governments and States, and you, the social partners – to be equal to the challenges that we are facing today.

Technological change is occurring, with all its benefits and, in some cases, drawbacks. Alongside energy transition, this transformation can be beneficial if we commit ourselves to it resolutely, change our development patterns and models and open our markets while introducing new rules and standards and if we increase competition among enterprises while giving workers more rights. The stakes are global and no country, whatever its economic and social system, can escape. At the country level, some may claim that they can hunker down, lock their doors and protect themselves from what is happening outside, but no country can evade the need for openness, and freedom or the reality of what is happening in the world of trade.

Change is proceeding apace and it can benefit us if we succeed in promoting certain values, setting certain rules and combating inequality. But if we simply let things happen without necessarily bringing progress for people in emerging countries, we will see a gradual loss of rights worldwide. We must therefore ensure that progress can be shared.

This is an issue that we in Europe are also facing. The crisis has led to painful austerity policies: social gains have been eroded, labour markets have been reformed and the return of growth has not silenced questions about the very future of work, a question on which you are inviting us to reflect. This is the source of your Organization's renewed legitimacy and strength, both because the ILO is the product of a history based on social justice and work, which deserves respect, and because it is the only organization that is capable of anticipating and coping with change on a global scale and setting rules to ensure that economic progress leads to social progress.

In that regard, I commend the Decent Work Agenda, which you are promoting on behalf of the ILO. The first priority of that agenda is to create jobs everywhere and provide employment that will allow all workers to receive a decent wage for their work. But these jobs must also be sustainable; they must be seen as a source of rights. And that is why we must not only promote growth, but pursue and provide incentives for it, particularly in Europe, both through our investment policies and by implementing education and training programmes leading to better jobs.

I would also like to stress the safeguards that must be provided for poor workers who need people to represent and stand up for them everywhere, whether in emerging, developing or developed countries. Today, over 20 million people are still victims of forced labour and one out of two workers worldwide is working in the informal economy. The conclusion that we should draw from that fact is that we must work towards the universal enjoyment of rights. The expansion of social protection – which, I remind you, covers only three out of 10 of the world's workers at present – must be a priority.

The contribution of the ILO will be essential in giving globalization a social dimension and defending the idea – in which France firmly believes because it represents the country's primary value – that competitiveness is necessary and indispensable if we are to maintain our place in the world, protect our products and promote quality jobs, but it cannot

be achieved at the expense of safeguards, and that a number of social rules, including social dialogue, can strengthen competitiveness.

I represent France in many international forums and bodies, and at the G7 and G20 summits and the major negotiating forums, I have seen how essential the contribution of the ILO and the Director-General is. States and governments need information; they need to be able to anticipate and question. If the ILO were no longer around, who would be there to predict changes and their consequences and to identify areas in which more training will be needed, the demand for labour in various regions and the potential for increasing the quality of products? Who would be there to defend the needs of the people? It is a matter not only of observing, but of obliging large organizations, the most powerful countries and, more generally, the decision-making bodies that have to make choices not only to take decisions during emergencies, but to anticipate future events around the world.

I therefore congratulate the Director-General on the quality of his statements at the major summits and I call on the ILO to become more involved in the preparations for all conferences. Several of them are on the horizon, including the conference on the post-2015 development agenda launched by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the culmination of which will be the debate in the General Assembly.

Development issues must also be considered from the perspective of improving social standards. I further call on the ILO to become more involved in trade negotiations, which have an impact on jobs, not in order to hinder such discussions but to assess their consequences. I would like to see the ILO become fully involved in preparations for the Climate Change Conference, and this is another reason for my presence here today.

The Minister of Labour has just signed on my behalf the new partnership agreement between the ILO and France for the period 2015–19. Our cooperation covers corporate social responsibility, the development of social protection, and the promotion of decent work. These are not empty words for France; they are obligations. The action that we will take together will ensure that we further improve the levels of vocational training and qualifications, particularly in Africa, to which France has strong links.

As regards the policy that France has implemented for the last three years, despite the crisis that has lasted for far too long, since it started in 2008, and despite the context of enhanced market competition and the need to combat unemployment, France has stood firm on fundamental rights, whether on employment contracts, the rules on worker representation, or social protection. Yes, progress is needed! Yes, change is needed! Yes, reform is needed! I felt that on issues and principles such as employment contracts, the rules on social protection, in particular for sickness and pensions, as well as workers' representation, there was a base of minimum rights that had to be preserved. That did not prevent us from negotiating or adopting legislation where we believed that it was possible to increase flexibility for enterprises, improve their ability to take action, and increase scope for investment, while respecting these principles.

I will give you a few examples. Job security, an issue approached by French trade unions in a varie-

ty of ways, was a priority for us: we wanted to ensure that when a business ran into problems, this did not automatically result in job losses, and that every other option was explored.

Similarly, longer life expectancy has meant that the pension system needed to change. A further proposal made by the unions, and understood by employers' representatives, was to ensure that tough working conditions are taken into account. We have endeavoured to ensure that the arrangements are as simple as possible, while allowing workers who have had particularly physically demanding jobs to retire earlier. At the same time, we have had to extend the period for which pension contributions are payable. For us, this was an opportunity to show that progress was possible even during difficult times.

In another area, we have even created a new right for French workers, the individual training account, giving all workers the opportunity to obtain qualifications and undergo training throughout their working lives. I have proposed that we introduce a personal activity account bringing together all of the entitlements accrued by workers in terms of training, or leave, which would ease changes and transitions throughout their working lives and sometimes even prevent breaks in their professional lives, so that they have personal capital allowing them to take control of their lives.

You will have understood that the aim is to ensure greater stability and transparency in an uncertain world. This demand for stability, security and transparency comes from business – and I can understand why – as enterprises need conditions in which they can invest and hire. But this demand also comes from workers all over the world: they want to know what tomorrow may bring, despite all of the unpredictability, uncertainty and crises which may occur, and to know what they can be sure of and what may change. I think this is a major challenge that we have to come to grips with collectively: how to ensure this transparency and predictability on a global scale.

We also wanted social dialogue, which is the foundation of your Organization, to be strengthened in France. Social dialogue is the domain, primarily, of the social partners. They are the ones who need to seek ways and means to negotiate and to sign up to agreements in the general interest. It is social dialogue that makes collective agreements possible. These inevitably reflect the will of the majority, allowing representative organizations to make commitments on behalf of workers and thereby determine their futures. We also wished to reflect the principles of social dialogue in the law that is currently being debated in the French Parliament so that it becomes simpler, focuses on the essentials, and covers all enterprises.

We have a duty to strive to put in place all the conditions to encourage hiring and create new jobs. In order to do so, the first prerequisite is growth. Without growth, wherever it may take place, jobs will not be created. On each occasion when it has been possible to make it easier for businesses to hire, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises – and I know that this is a topic which you have particularly focused on. We have tried, once again, to establish clear rules for the social partners and for enterprises. This has been the case for legal proceedings and dispute resolution, among others, in order to ensure that workers know exactly how long

it will take them to obtain compensation for lost rights or harm they have suffered, and similarly, that businesses know how much they may have to pay if violations have occurred and they are found responsible, and in what timeframe.

We also wanted to make fixed-term contracts more flexible, without increasing precarious employment. We have therefore retained the existing frameworks but made it easier to renew these contracts with a view to progressing towards a permanent contract.

We wanted to develop apprenticeships to give more young people access to jobs, without jeopardizing the principles of security. I did not want to invent new types of employment contract, which would have resulted in additional complexity and uncertainty. I wanted more flexibility and adaptability but at the same time more security and more safeguards, ensuring that both enterprises and workers can ultimately benefit from this progress.

I would like to conclude by talking about the environment, in the light of the responsibility borne not only by France but, above all, the whole world, as France cannot resolve the problem of climate change alone. We in France may make many claims for ourselves, but not that. Agreement will therefore have to be reached among all countries. Consensus must prevail, and such an agreement must be universal. That is what we want in terms of labour standards, and it must also apply to environmental standards if we are to fight global warming. So the agreement must be universal; all countries must sign up. This agreement needs to be differentiated, because developing countries must not be subject to the same constraints as countries that have already taken a great deal from the planet in terms of natural resources. We want it to be a binding agreement, that is to say, verified and regularly assessed, to be certain that we can prevent global warming from exceeding the 2°C target. We therefore want States to submit their contributions now. That is the responsibility of governments. As I speak, only 40 countries have submitted their contribution. When you look at those contributions closely – and this applies to a number of rich countries – not enough efforts have been undertaken to achieve the target. We will hence be bringing the necessary level of pressure to bear on governments. That is France's role, and the role of all those able to take action. You, too, can put pressure on your governments.

The agreement presupposes that governments have made their contributions and that it has been possible to assess these contributions and count them towards the target. But there will be no agreement if the expected funding is not provided, in particular by developing countries, the most fragile and vulnerable countries, that is, the majority of countries. Those countries – and some of you represent those regions – want there to be a specific financial commitment. Starting in 2020, we must release US\$100 billion to facilitate the adaptation and transition of those countries that need access to technology, to be able to develop renewable energies and to increase investment in energy efficiency. If we do not receive the \$100 billion – which is to come from the public and the private sectors, from major international financial institutions as well as from private enterprise and the non-governmental sector – if there is no funding, there will be no agreement.

Finally, if we want the Paris conference to succeed, there needs to be what we are calling a “solutions agenda”. And this is where I want to make an appeal to you. The solutions agenda comprises what local communities, major regions and the whole world can do. It is what large non-governmental organizations can do, and, above all, what business and the social partners can do to ensure success in the energy transition and the fight against climate change. We need the full involvement of such partners and of you, the social partners and business representatives. It is in the interest of the planet. It is in the interest of business. It is in the interest of economic development. And it is in the interest of social progress.

The fight against climate change in no way poses a threat to jobs. I say that because I see how worried people are in many countries, particularly in developing countries, who fear that there will be additional constraints on growth. This is also a concern in developed countries. If we impose new constraints and new rules, if the price of carbon is fixed continent-wide or globally, will that not discourage people from investing and penalize employment? The answer is no, quite the contrary. That is because we will have new rules for behaviour, production, transport and consumption, and because we are going to tackle climate change and implement the energy transition. In so doing, we will create more jobs, boost investment and increase growth.

The ILO has stated that 60 million jobs could be generated over the next 20 years, and I think that estimate must be right. But that figure is just for reference purposes. Clearly, if we do nothing, jobs will be lost, unemployment will increase and living standards will decline. However, if we commit to precise rules and to fossil fuel and carbon prices that can be stabilized, then there can be more investment and more jobs.

Taking action against climate change means acting to promote growth, justice and labour rights, because these go hand in hand: wherever there is senseless exploitation of natural resources, there is also unacceptable exploitation of the workforce. Acting against climate change also means changing production methods and development patterns. This will only be possible with the support of the social partners.

Transition to a low-carbon economy will open up prospects for development and growth and will help to introduce technologies to countries where they are not currently being promoted. For developing countries, this will be a leap forward that will not only allow them to catch up with richer countries but that will enable them to go even faster, without depleting their natural resources. We therefore need to make funding available for the transition to succeed. That is the role of the public sector and major financial institutions. Your role is to predict what will result from this transition and to anticipate the jobs, skills, training and qualifications that will be required in every country of the world, which will inevitably be profoundly affected by the transition to the new economy.

You launched the initiative on the future of work for your centenary in 2019 with precisely the aim of evaluating the scale of the changes under way and predicting the impact of new technology and decisions that we are going to take on climate. You also wish to better describe new value chains and to properly understand what may happen to the infor-

mal economy in the next few years. The challenge is to know whether new growth will deepen inequality or whether, on the contrary, we can bring about better growth by fighting inequality.

In this respect, the decisions and choices made by businesses with regard to subcontracting and procurement within value chains will be decisive for all countries concerned, whether they are buyers or producers. The ILO is hence playing its part properly by raising the subject of corporate social responsibility, in particular of multinationals. France lends you its full support in this matter. It is unacceptable for multinationals to feign ignorance of the impact of their production decisions. It is all too easy to organize a value chain which claims to give consumers the guarantee of a brand name, without telling them about the true conditions in which products are manufactured. Accountability has therefore to be imposed.

To my mind, the negotiations conducted following the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 constituted a first step. Under the auspices of the ILO, more than 150 production and distribution companies signed an agreement with trade union organizations on safety in textile factories in Bangladesh. In particular, this agreement provided for a programme of factory inspections and transparent monitoring of those checks. What was possible for textiles must surely be possible across the entire manufacturing sector, allowing purchasers and large enterprises to be held to account.

On behalf of France, I would also like to express support for the creation of a global fund to prevent workplace accidents, which will be used to help countries in the South in particular, by providing the necessary finance.

Today's economy is global and therefore there should also be global accountability. Only your Organization can contribute to this.

Your institution was founded on the basis of the principles of social dialogue, and with the intention that standards be not only set, but also respected, and that a corpus of international labour law be developed. This is in the ultimate interest of both enterprises and workers. I would also like to emphasize the link between international labour law and the principles of freedom and pluralism. Without freedom, there can be no labour law, which entails freedom of association, the right to strike and the promotion of decent work!

Your Organization's task is not only to preserve, protect and conserve; it is also responsible for innovating, inventing and imagining, and must do so on the basis of the same principles on which it was established: social dialogue and respect for standards and human dignity. It is these values that will allow us to face current demographic challenges, such as the wide-scale migratory flows that sometimes result from crises and wars or from climate change but are most often a consequence of poverty and a lack of jobs.

Unless countries are allowed to develop, produce and reach a certain level of development, we will have to face migratory flows and all their well-known consequences for the families concerned. It is not possible to receive migrants under all conditions and in all situations. This is another challenge that you must address. Still another challenge is posed by the opening and expansion of markets, which raises the question of what conditions we must place on free trade. Lastly, as I said, there is the challenge of climate change, which will haunt us for decades to come. France will always stand shoulder to shoulder with you, as an active player, just as it has done since the establishment of the International Labour Organization and the Office.

Let me repeat: we share your values. The ILO has an active role to play in the global regulatory system and there can be no economic success, no true progress in our societies and no change or improvement in the well-being of individuals unless there are rights, those rights are respected, and social dialogue is in place in order to avoid conflicts. I have not forgotten that your Organization was born in the aftermath of a war. Our venue today is symbolic. We must always avoid conflict and confrontation. The role of the ILO is not to blur our interests or gloss over our differences, but to allow us to talk, negotiate, decide and, together, achieve progress for the world as a whole.

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The PRESIDENT

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Thank you. France was more than one of the founding members of this Organization, it was a veritable instigator and prime mover. I am reassured by the fact that the close relationship between France and the ILO is stronger than ever.

*(The sitting was closed at 4.50 p.m.)*

## Special sitting

Thursday, 11 June 2015, 5.45 p.m.

*President: Ms Jaunzeme*

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
JUAN CARLOS VARELA RODRÍGUEZ,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA**

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The PRESIDENT

I am honoured to open a special sitting in which His Excellency President Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, will address the Conference. Welcome, Excellency, to the Parliament of Labour. Director-General, please take the floor to introduce our distinguished guest.

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*Original Spanish:* The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Your Excellency Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, it is an honour to have you among us, in this house of international tripartism, after the historic summit of the Americas in April, which you hosted. Your presence in this Conference is another example of the high level of responsibility that you have accepted in contributing to the creation of quality jobs that will help towards the sustainability of our planet. This ILO you are visiting today is an institution founded on the highest human values, and devoted to the service of putting those values into practice, especially ensuring social justice in peoples' working lives. I am sure that you fully support those values.

As I mentioned earlier, I have recently been to your country. I was particularly impressed by its economic dynamism, but also by the firm commitment to social dialogue, combined with a policy of respect for international labour standards, which is reflected in specific initiatives to build a more equitable, inclusive and just society based on social dialogue.

We are aware of your Government's goal of eliminating child labour by 2020 and the priority given to creating jobs for young people, and the commitment of your Government to improving education to bring it into line with the needs of the productive sector and thus reduce the level of informality. We have listened with great interest to the commitment made by your Government to contribute ideas on the basis of the report that I presented to this session of the Conference, which could be transformed into specific actions in the centenary year of this Organization in 2019. In these times of economic uncertainty, dialogue between the political, business and labour worlds is becoming increasingly important. We therefore welcome the initiative, which reflects your Government's decision to create a genuine

model of growth with social justice and to ratify one of the governance Conventions, the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), which will be formally deposited at the end of this Summit.

We also warmly welcome the news that Panama has begun the process of ratification of the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, with a promotion campaign to be launched on Friday 12 June, immediately after the high-level panel discussion on the occasion of the World Day against Child Labour. One of the panellists will be Ms Lorena Castillo de Varela, the First Lady of the Republic of Panama.

I welcome you once again to this Summit, in the same warm and hospitable way that you welcomed me to your beautiful country.

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*Original Spanish:* Mr VARELA RODRÍGUEZ (*President of the Republic of Panama*)

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Panama, I would like to thank the ILO for giving me this opportunity to address all of you as part of the 104th session of the International Labour Conference.

I feel honoured to have been invited, as a representative of the Americas, together with a distinguished group of leaders from other regions of the world, to attend this international forum, which creates labour standards and public policies. Since its establishment at the beginning of the twentieth century, it has been the main instigator of consensus between governments, workers and employers, contributing not only to the development of nations, but also to governance, with due respect for the highest standards and fundamental rights in the world of work.

I fully identify with the principles that govern the ILO because I am convinced that dialogue and consensus are key tools in maintaining social peace in all countries. I am not talking to you merely as the Head of State. I am also talking to you as a human being; someone who feels, who sees inequality first hand, who fights for social justice on a daily basis. I am talking to you as a Head of State who was educated from a young age by the Jesuits. They instilled into the depth of my soul a love of my neighbour, respect for others and the pursuit of the common good among all people. For 22 years in my private life, I had to work to live, and in my seven years in politics, and however many more years that God gives me on this planet, I will live to serve.

In 1968, there was a breakdown in Panama's constitutional order because, as in many Latin American countries, it suffered a dictatorship, which ended thanks to the intervention of a foreign power in December 1989. Afterwards, we entered a period of re-democratization, reconstruction and national reconciliation, following which we were able to recover our economy and lay the foundations for the prosperous, peace-loving and democratic nation that we have today. Despite the ups and downs over the 25 years it took to recover our economy and return to democracy, we can now say that, in Panama, the private sector enjoys the right to conduct business, the labour rights of workers are respected, trade unions enjoy freedom of association, and the media enjoys the right to freedom of expression and information. Politics in my country is a service and cannot be viewed as a business. The fundamental rights of all citizens are respected, without distinction of any kind. We Panamanians are preparing to become global citizens, with responsibilities, so that we can face today's challenges together. We are a noble, hard-working people, struggling every day to get by, and our history is testimony to what the Government, workers and private business can achieve when we join forces.

However, despite having one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America over the last ten years and a predicted growth of 6 per cent in the next five years, much remains to be done before the economic growth enjoyed by Panama is transformed into equitable human development for the whole population. We hope in all humility that our country can become a model for sustainable development in the Americas, where economic growth and social welfare go hand in hand, so that the growth of Panama is growth for all Panamanians.

This means making sure that state resources are used to benefit its citizens and investing to ensure that all its people have equal access to clean drinking water, basic sanitation and first-rate public services, including education, health and transport. We cannot talk about development if we do not begin by guaranteeing that our citizens have access to clean drinking water and sanitation to ensure that everyone can enjoy a better, dignified life and good health.

All States have an obligation to guarantee equal education for all young people, without distinction of any kind, to ensure that they receive the tools they need to successfully join the world of work and develop their full potential. The same holds true for all other essential public services, which should be provided by the State in an efficient, safe and reliable manner.

Before I became President of the Republic, I spent over 20 years travelling throughout the country and, while on my travels, I saw that the vast majority of workers who, day after day, turn on and turn off the lights in our modern capital city at night go back home to neglected neighbourhoods, with no access to essential public services, where insecurity reigns on the streets and where thousands of young people at risk of social exclusion are torn between loyalty to the State, to which we all belong (Government, private sector and civil society), or loyalty to criminal gangs and organized crime. Insecurity fuels inequality and we are focusing all our efforts, as should be done in the rest of the world, on these at-risk young people in the slums of our country to ensure that they are given the opportunity to have a decent

life, with training, access to education and decent jobs. That is the best way to promote social mobility and ensure that everyone can be a part of the country's economic growth and development. It can be seen in the slums of our country, which can be found in most Latin American countries. It is a region of great contrasts where, despite being a continent with peace and economic growth, inequality and a lack of opportunities are the root causes of the major challenges that we face: poverty and insecurity.

So, we have to continue fighting against inequality, by creating jobs and ensuring that the most vulnerable sectors of society have access to essential public services, decent housing, health benefits and a good education that will enable our citizens to join the economy as technicians or professionals. By investing heavily and building public infrastructure in these slums, not only will we be settling the social debt owed to our people, we will also be giving many young people work opportunities to steer them towards the right path in life; the path of decent work and formal employment.

If, however, we really want to be successful in combating insecurity, we have to target the bottom of the pyramid of these criminal gangs, namely these young people at social risk. If we do not give them an alternative, they will go on to join the ranks of these gangs and undoubtedly threaten the social peace of our countries. It is my firm conviction that we must strengthen the State's presence throughout our national territories with a view to ensuring that all vulnerable communities, in both cities and the countryside, in islands and coastal areas, have access to drinking water, basic sanitation, health services and good education. In this way we will be able to consolidate social peace and to reduce levels of poverty and insecurity in Latin America and prevent local criminal groups, with links to international criminal networks, from gaining further ground in those marginalized areas and neighbourhoods where the Government's presence is hardly present or altogether lacking. Inspired by this vision and in fulfilment of the pledges set forth in our 2014–19 Government plan, we have taken concerted measures to put a stop to speculation in food prices.

We are working to bring drinking water and basic sanitation to our entire population by laying pipelines and installing sewage systems throughout the country.

We have launched major social projects to ensure that our youngsters grow up in safe areas with opportunities and better jobs, and with sports facilities and cultural centres to keep them away from criminal activities. Through the implementation of our integrated security plan and a two-pronged approach designed to prevent people getting into crime and to ensure compliance with the law, we have been able significantly to reduce delinquency and criminality. We have also embarked on a wide-scale plan to renovate 3,000 national schools with the support of the private sector and together we aim to build more than 10,000 new classrooms so that all our schoolchildren can attend school on a full-day basis and continue to secondary education.

We are adopting laws to strengthen our social protection system so that every schoolchild and student has the necessary resources to complete secondary education and that, as adults, they can live a decent life. We have launched a survey of preventive

health care and a national debate on the consolidation of our public health system so that we can improve services and make savings, thereby ensuring better health care, treatment and medicines of better quality.

Apart from problems of law and order, the world is also facing an epidemic of cardiovascular disease and this is unquestionably an area where preventive health care must play a frontline role in preventing this disease.

We are also building a modern, efficient public transport system, with a range of new projects, including two new lines for the Panama metro, with a view to improving the quality of life of our citizens.

Thus, too, in the area of vocational training, we are currently rolling out a plan to train more than 10,000 teachers who, over the next few years, will be taught English, so that they can deliver a 100 per cent bilingual teaching service.

Students will have the opportunity to go to university or to study at new technical colleges, which will prepare them for the new jobs being created in our service economy in such areas as logistics and tourism.

I should point out that the curriculums at these technical colleges are being developed on the basis of a study launched by the High Commission on National Employment Policy and carried out with the assistance of the ILO and the involvement of representatives of the country's private sector, trade unions, trade union leaders and academics. In addition to all these measures, Panama has also set itself the goal of being the first country in Latin America to fully eradicate child labour and we hope to achieve that goal during this administration.

One major challenge that we face in both the public and private sectors is the need to transform the wealth that our countries have created through the efforts of the private sector into a better quality of life for all our citizens. For this purpose, public-private partnerships and private sector social responsibility programmes are of key importance, in helping Governments to tackle their countries' social problems and seek the equality that is so badly needed.

In this context, I would like to stress that, just as there is a separation of powers in all democratic countries, so should there be a clear separation between those involved in public life and those working in the private sector. The State's resources and public money must be managed in a transparent fashion to the benefit of all, and with equity, and must always be dedicated to the fulfilment of the government's agenda, ensuring that individuals and legal entities can participate on an equal footing in public procurement processes.

Above all, it must be clearly understood that, in dealings between labour and the private sector, the government plays the role of an impartial judge when disputes arise between workers and employers.

The year 2015 will be a landmark year for humankind, with two historic events: the agreement on climate change in Paris and the adoption of the sustainable development goals. The task of concluding both these processes is the shared responsibility of all our countries and our moral commitment to the generations of the future.

We are, beyond any question, on the threshold of a new era, an era in which we can rethink and redesign the manner in which we produce goods and the

way in which we can take advantage of the opportunities for progress. Climate change requires us to move to more sustainable means of production.

Here, with your indulgence, I would like to share with you an account from some 20 years ago, in my own experience. I was driving through the sugar cane plantations in my country, in my home region, and I saw fields of burnt cane and workers cutting the cane in subhuman conditions, toiling under the midday sun. I said to myself: "This is not acceptable, this is not what God wants, either for His children or for our wondrous planet." I went to talk to the people in charge of those cane fields and I told them: "You are going to have to stop burning the fields."

Many of them protested that this would not be economically viable, that they would not get the productivity they needed, that they would not achieve their targets. How wrong they were!

In the company where I worked, we stopped burning the cane fields 20 years ago. The result has brought significant savings: savings in fuel because the raw cane could be used afterwards in solid fuel burners to generate power. The greatest savings, however, came in the form of the dignity of work and the quality of life of the workers, the people working in those cane fields. The money that was saved was then ploughed back into social programmes, into pay increases, into public transport and, most importantly, into better working conditions for the employees.

In this way I was able to demonstrate that God had a different plan for us on this wonderful planet and not the sorry spectacle I saw before me and that, to protect the environment sometimes all you have to do is to find the correct way of doing things. What is the point of pursuing economic development if we also destroy our environment and, with it, this beautiful planet on which we all live?

Our purpose is clear: we must aim forthwith for a low-carbon economy, a more green economy. For this it is essential that we encourage innovation and revolutionize our traditional patterns of production and consumption. The economy of the future must be not only more green, but also more inclusive.

Development is not just a matter of amassing wealth. Development means, first and foremost, the widening of opportunities so that people can live lives of greater dignity, which are fuller and more gratifying and at one with the environment. Essentially, a green economy is one which has low carbon emissions, uses resources efficiently and is socially inclusive. The transition to this new economy must also be equitable.

It is only natural that the process of structural change will have significant impacts on businesses, workers and communities. Many will benefit, but others will find it difficult. For this reason, the transition needs to be properly planned with a careful analysis of the impacts in the different production sectors and social groups. This will prepare the ground for better informed policy responses that more effectively address these new challenges and strike the right balance between cost and benefit. Social dialogue is undoubtedly a key tool in our endeavours to achieve this goal.

In its day, the industrial revolution radically transformed the way we organized production and, as a result, our labour relations. There was a need to redesign the rules of the game at a global level to avoid unacceptable situations in the world of work

and it was out of that demand for social justice that the International Labour Organization was born.

The current revolution in technology and communications is changing global supply chains and the traditional production model. It is also having a dramatic impact on the world of work. Many new forms of labour relations were previously not considered in our legislation. The transition to a green economy is also generating considerable changes in terms of employment. New jobs are being created, while others are lost. The knowledge and skills required by our societies to move successfully towards a new economy have changed and will continue to change at a dizzying pace.

It is in this light that the ILO's work on the labour dimension of environmental sustainability acquires particular relevance. Green jobs contribute to the conservation, recovery and improvement of environmental conditions in any economic sector. The sustained creation of such jobs relies on a number of factors. On this occasion, however, I would just like to highlight one factor which I consider essential: the development of the skills needed to drive a low-carbon economy.

Moving towards a greener economy requires new skills for new jobs and the adaptation of pre-existing jobs. The transition will be impossible without the adequate skills. The bottleneck created by the skills gap and the lack of skilled workers is starting to become apparent in various sectors such as those of renewable energy, energy and resource efficiency, building renovation, construction and environmental services. Developing skills to create fair opportunities to access education and training, not only expedites the adoption and dissemination of eco-friendly technology, but also guarantees a fairer distribution of the productivity gains resulting from the transition. This is the best way of achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, where decent work stops being the privilege of a few to become the right of the majority.

The people and the Government of Panama aspire to play a key role in the economy of the future, the low-carbon economy. The Government has therefore set particular store by developing new institutional capacities to design and introduce policies which will enable a rapid and fair transition in that direction. Accordingly, this year we established the Ministry of the Environment, fulfilling one of the priorities in our governance programme. This Ministry is in charge of everything regarding the protection, conservation and recovery of the environment. It will be responsible for monitoring and collecting the information required to take policy decisions and improve the allocation of resources. Our dream is to establish Panama as a model of sustainable human and social development in harmony with nature.

Our Ministry of the Environment is the result of the joint work of the Government, and the civil society and environmental organizations that support this objective. It is therefore the result of collaboration within the increasingly participatory democracy that is beginning to emerge in Panama.

In parallel to this effort on the environment, and as I indicated previously, we have launched an ambitious strategy to revitalize the national vocational

training system. We want to develop the skills of our people and we want to democratize access to good quality educational and training services with a view to achieving sustainable and inclusive growth.

With the support of the ILO, we designed a solid strategy to increase employment, productivity and social inclusion through more and better technical and vocational training. This process, under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour, included the participation of employer and worker representatives, universities and various state institutions.

An employment projection was carried out within this process of social dialogue. It is estimated that Panama needs to create at least 230,000 jobs between 2015 and 2020. The construction sector is set to be the most dynamic sector, with more than 60,000 new jobs over that period. Many of these jobs could be greener and achieving that depends on us.

In Central America, again with the support of the ILO, we have launched a pioneer project with vocational training institutions to make certain jobs greener. New material has been included in curricula, introducing new skills related to the environmental aspects of productive processes. We have also adopted Brazil's SENAI technology forecasting system to anticipate vocational training needs, with a view to reducing the skills gap. The first forecasting studies have been carried out in areas of high potential for the generation of green jobs. INADEH – the Panamanian institute for occupational training – is actively involved in this process.

We need innovative solutions to address the fundamental challenges of climate change and poverty. Decent work, training and education are the most effective means of making determined progress on both fronts. It is therefore essential to introduce this labour dimension in the international discussion on the environment, climate change and sustainable human development.

Thank you very much for allowing me to share with you my country's vision and its commitment to social justice, sustainable development, and a consolidated democracy which seeks the well-being of its people. Many presidents leave significant infrastructural achievements behind them. They all work towards that objective. Two important objectives for me, aside from infrastructural achievements, are leaving a functioning democracy in my country, where the sole motivation of the men and women in public life is the common good and the well-being of the people; and ensuring that the political process in Panama and throughout the world is at the service of all. The ILO can count on the enthusiastic support of the Government and people of Panama.

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The PRESIDENT

Thank you, Your Excellency, for finding the time in your busy schedule to come and address us and for delivering that clear and constructive message to the Conference. On behalf of the Conference Officers and all participants, I should like to express our deep gratitude.

*(The World of Work Summit adjourned at 6.20 p.m.)*



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